INNOVATIONS FOR SUCCESSFUL SOCIETIES

Reconciling the Impossible: South Africa's Government of National Unity

In 1994, Nelson Mandela's African National Congress bridged distrust among rivals in the National Party and the Inkatha Freedom Party to form a Government of National Unity. The new government initiated social programs designed to improve access to education, housing, and other services, and facilitated development of a new constitution to replace the country's apartheid-era legal system. These achievements were possible because of procedural innovations as well as exceptional leadership. Although the National Party withdrew from the arrangement in 1996, the unity government fostered cross-party collaboration and laid the framework for an inclusive and democratic South Africa. The model developed became a reference point for negotiators and leaders in other parts of the world.

Inauguration of Nelson Mandela 1994 with Deputies FW de Klerk and Thabo Mbeki. Photo by Africa Media Online/Alamy Stock Photo.

Power-Sharing Governments

Leaders of power-sharing governments, often called unity governments, face special challenges in identifying and implementing policy priorities. A new ISS case study series assesses the pros and cons of different approaches to cabinet management in these circumstances. It profiles how leaders sought to foster coherent policies, manage operations, and reduce tensions in times of conflict in **Kenya**, **Nepal**, and **Tunisia**.

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ISS Featured Interviews

In a 2015 interview with ISS, **Raila Odinga**, former Prime Minister of Kenya, describes the development and implementation of Kenya's National Accord and Reconciliation Act of 2008, an agreement between the Orange Democratic Movement and the Party of National

Unity. He explains how leaders allocated posts between the two parties, improved coordination among ministries in each policy sector, managed meetings, and resolved disputes.

In a 2016 interview with ISS, **Hakim Ben Hammouda**, Tunisia's former Minister of Economy and Finance, reflects on his time in Prime Minister Medhi Jomaa's caretaker cabinet. He describes the process of formulating economic priorities and the steps taken to win parliamentary support for the proposed reforms.

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